

INVESTIGATIVE REPORT:

This report pertains to an investigation of the identification of the burial location, or headstone markings, of a member of the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) during the Great War 1914-1921.

SUBMITTED TO:

[CWGC Canadian Agency](#)

66 Slater Street

Suite 1707

Ottawa Ontario Canada K1A 0P4

Att: [Dominique Boulais](#)

Report Date: 15 October 2015

Reason for Submission: ("X" means purpose of the report)

Casualty Identification:		Burial Information:	
Confirmed Identity	X	Burial Location Identified	X
Most Probable Identity		Grave Stone Correction	X
Questionable Identity		Grave Records Correction	X
Incorrect Identity		Request for CWGC Details	
Other		Other	

Supporting Documents: (# refers to attachment number; "I" information provided)

Casualty Identification:		Burial Information:	
Digweed, Edwin George	i	Courcelette British Cemetery	link
25 th Infantry Battalion	i	Somme, France	i
Private #40629	i	Plot 10 Row C Grave 2	i
Date of Death: 16/09/1916	link	Date of re-burial: 14/3/1919	i
Attestation Papers	link	Cemetery Schematic	link
Service Record	link	Graves Registration Report	7
Circumstance of Death	1	Concentration of Grave	8
CEF Canada Register	2	Headstone Register	
War Diary Extract(s)	3	Casualty Spreadsheet	
Area Map(s)	4	Trench Map Exhumation	
Trench Map(s)	5	Grave Stone Photograph	
Possible Candidates List	6	Grave Stone Inscription	
Excluded Candidates List		Other Exhumations	9
Other		Reporting and Review	10

Summary of Findings:

The Concentration of Graves – Reburial for the Courcelette British Cemetery lists a soldier of the 25th Infantry Battalion CEF with a Service Number of the form "40_289" and name "G----wee" buried in Plot 10 Row C Grave 2.

A review of the files clearly indicates that these are the remains of Private Edwin George Digweed #406289, 25th Battalion, killed in action during the capture of the Village of Courcelette on September 16, 1916.

Details of Findings:

The findings are conclusive that the remains in Plot 10 Row C Grave 2 are those of Private Edwin George Digweed #406289 of the 25th Infantry Battalion, 5th Infantry Brigade, 2nd Canadian Division, Canadian Expeditionary Force.

The findings are based on the following:

1. The Circumstance of Death file for Private Digweed reports that he was killed in action in the vicinity of Courcelette on 16 September 1916. There was no record of burial (Attachment #1).
2. The CEF War Grave Register also states there is no record of burial but it was “*probably near R30c*”. That is a map reference to MAP 57d Sector R and Sub-Sector c (see details that follow). As there was no known exhumation and identification of the remains of Private Digweed, his name was inscribed on the Vimy Memorial (Attachment #2).
3. The War Diary of the 25th Infantry Battalion is clear that the 5th Infantry Brigade and specifically the 25th Battalion, was involved directly in the capture of the Village of Courcelette on September 15, 1916. The battalion moved through the east side of Courcelette, in a south to north advance. On the following day, when Private Digweed was killed in action, the battalion was consolidating the new line “*under extremely heavy shell fire day and night, casualties cannot be estimated*” (Appendix #3).
4. Map #6 from the authoritative Nicholson reference shows the position of the 25th Infantry Battalion, relative to others of the Canadian Expeditionary Force, during the taking of Courcelette on September 15-16, 1916 (Attachment #4). The area of the 25th Battalions attack is marked (blue oval).
5. A period trench map of the area of Courcelette for September 16, 1916 expands on the details shown in the map (Attachment #5). The area where the 25th Battalion was active are in 57D R29 and R30 (green oval), which overlaps with the main Sector R29 (red square), referenced elsewhere in this report. The “Sugar Factory” is marked on the trench map to provide a reference point to the area map. The Grave Register had referred to a burial near R30c, which is immediately adjacent to R29d.
6. There were a large number of Officers and Other Ranks of the 25th Battalion killed during the attack on Courcelette in September 1916. A review of all of the Service Numbers for that group, that were named on the Vimy Memorial, showed clearly that only Private Digweed had a number sequence that matched the Concentration of Grave report (Attachment #6). Further review showed that applied to the complete duration of the war, not just September 1916.
7. The Graves Registration Report Form did not suggest that there was a soldier of the 25th Infantry Battalion in Grave 10.C.2, however there was some editing to show that there may have been a number or partial name associated with the remains (Attachment #7).

8. Review of the Concentration of Graves –Reburial documents, which in this case was the primary reference, showed that it was known that the remains that were exhumed and reburied in Courcellette 10.C.2 were of a soldier of the 25th Battalion, Canadian with a partial number 40_289. It was also noted that there was a partial name in the form of “G---wee” (Attachment #8). The remains were located in the area of Map 57 Sector R29 and Sub-Sector d (as previously marked on the trench map).
9. The remains that were exhumed and re-buried in Plot 10 Row C Grave 3 were also only partially identified on the Concentration of Grave Report. Although it initially appears that less information is known about those remains than those of Private Digweed, the IWGC successfully identified that soldier as Private Vincent McGonigal #466637 of the 31st Infantry Battalion. We reviewed that case as well as it was valuable evidence of the findings in 57d R39 as the 31st Battalion was in the exact same position on 27 September 1916 as the 25th Battalion was on 16 September 1916. As such, both sets of remains were exhumed from the same area (Attachment #9).

Action Required:

The “Investigative Report” has been prepared in accordance with the procedures and criteria set out by the CWGC, should they wish to make any changes to the commemoration details (Attachment #10).

The results of this investigation are conclusive that the remains in Plot 10 Row C Grave 2 at the Courcellette British Cemetery are those of Private Edwin George Digweed of the 25th Infantry Battalion, killed in action during the capture of Courcellette on September 16, 1916.

ATTACHMENT #1

1. NO.	2. RANK OR RATING	3. SURNAME	4. CHRISTIAN NAMES
406289	Private	DIGWEED	George
5. UNIT OR SHIP		6. DATE OF CASUALTY	7. H.Q. FILE NO.
25th. Battalion		16-9-16	649-D-4906
8. CIRCUMSTANCES OF CASUALTY		9. NAME, RELATIONSHIP AND ADDRESS OF NEXT OF KIN	
"KILLED IN ACTION"		Not Stated	
10. LOCATION OF UNIT AT TIME OF CASUALTY			
VICINITY OF COURCELETTE			
NOTE:—Items 11, 12 and 13 are not to be completed until grave is permanently located.			
11. CEMETERY	12. LOCATION OF CEMETERY	13. GRAVE LOCATION	14. REGISTERED NO. OF GRAVE
		Grave..... Row..... Plot.....	
15. PHOTOGRAPH OF GRAVE TAKEN	16. EXPOSURE NO.	17. PHOTOGRAPH OF GRAVE AND CEMETERY SUPPLIED TO	
18. FURTHER PARTICULARS ON REVERSE SIDE OF SHEET.			

H. P. R. 3043
 H. Q. 1772-10-108
 12th. Div.
 11. P. R. 3043 and 12. 1000

ATTACHMENT #2

E-13

EDWIN. and Vimy form

NUMBER 406289 RANK Pte. NAME DIGWEED YG. 12392 12295

UNIT 25th Bn. NEXT-OF-KIN

FILE NO. R.L.

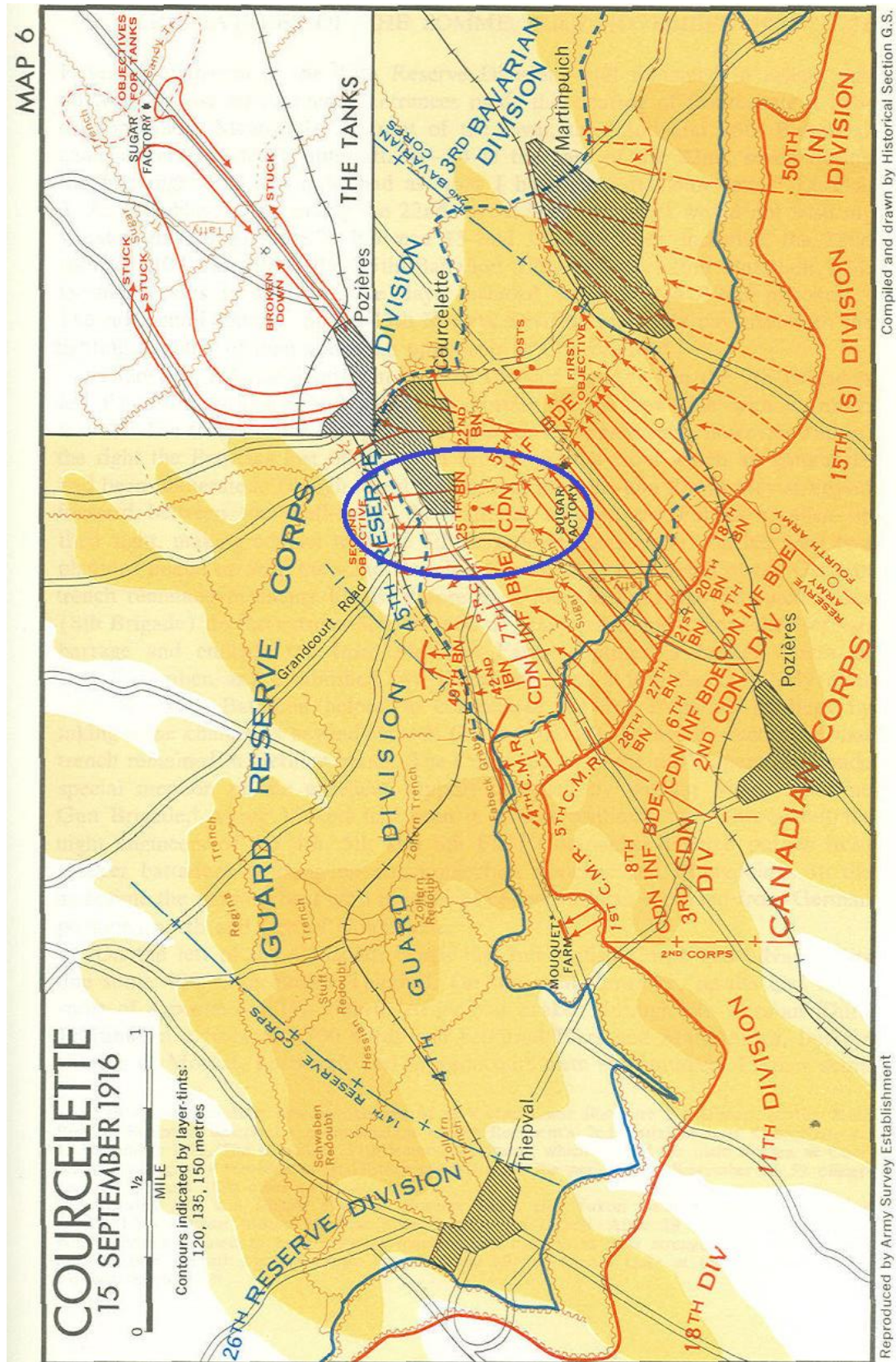
DATE OF DEATH	CAUSE AND PLACE OF DEATH	CAS. SHEET NO.
16.9.16.	Killed in Action	1326

DATE OF BURIAL	PLACE OF BURIAL	DESCRIPTION OF GRAVE
X	No record of burial probably near R.30c.	Authority on R. L. 26 7a Vol 13

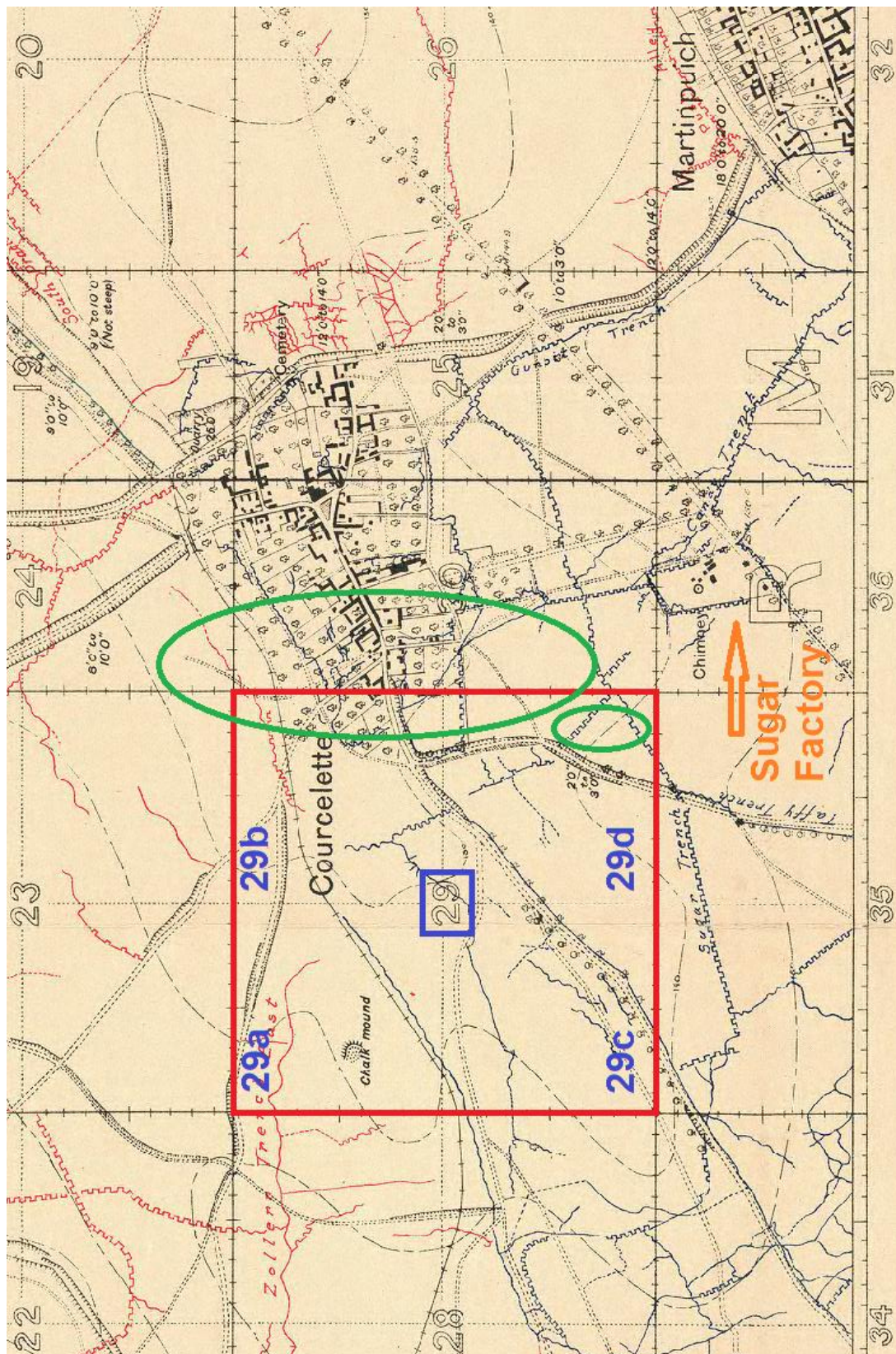
✠ VIMY ✠
 MEMORIAL

[illegible]

ATTACHMENT #4



ATTACHMENT #5



ATTACHMENT #6

Surname

☒ Initials
☐ Forename

Country
(commemorated in)
Country
Cemetery or memorial
Vimy Memorial
War
First World War
Date of death: (starting)
-- -- -- --
Date of death: (ending)
-- -- -- --
Served with
☐ United Kingdom Forces
☐ Australian Forces
☐ New Zealand Forces
☒ Canadian Forces
☐ Indian Forces
☐ South African Forces
☐ Non-Commonwealth Nationals

i
Export search results in a spreadsheet-friendly format.
Download results

1 record(s) match your search criteria

Name	Rank	Service Number	Date of Death	Age	Regiment / Service	Service Country	Grave / Memorial Reference	Cemetery / Memorial Name	Docs.
DIGWEED, EDWIN GEORGE	Private	408289	18/09/1918	22	Canadian Infantry	Canadian		VIMY MEMORIAL	

Served in
☒ Army
☐ Air Force
☐ Navy
☐ Merchant Navy
☐ Civilian War Dead
☐ Miscellaneous
Unit
25th Bn
Rank

Service Number
289

ATTACHMENT #7

GFP. 8.9.20 Army Form W. 3372.

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT.
GRAVES REGISTRATION REPORT FORM.

3rd A S No W/ *3150*
REPORT No. 2. SCHEDULE No. *110*

Commune. Courcelette.

PLACE OF BURIAL COURCELETTE B.C.

Map Reference 57d.R.29.c.9.8.

The following are buried here:— *Robertson* Major.

Regiment	No.	Name	Rank and Initials	Date of Death	Cross Erected or G. R. U'd.	Plot, Row and Grave
PLOT 10 ROW "B" (Cont'd)						
B.E.F.		UNKNOWN			All	12. ✓
52nd C.E.F.		UNKNOWN			Crosses	13. ✓
C.E.F.		UNKNOWN			Erected	14. ✓
14th Essex	28303	RUSSELL ✓	Pte W.			15. ✓
<i>4th</i> 1st Bedford Regt.	<i>15493</i>	WARNESFORD ✓	" W.C.	<i>24-10-16</i>	<i>RU/25323</i>	16. ✓
C.E.F.		UNKNOWN				17. ✓
52nd C.E.F.	<i>62278</i>	GLOVER ✓	Pte L.T.	<i>6-10-16</i>	<i>can/14/73063</i> <i>5/1479a</i>	18. ✓
52nd -do-		UNKNOWN				19. ✓
B.E.F.		UNKNOWN BRITISH				20. ✓
ROW "C"						
C.E.F.		UNKNOWN				1. ✓
	<i>400289</i>	UNKNOWN BRITISH SOLDIER. (STET.)			<i>K.Y. 1065</i>	2. ✓
<i>3rd</i> Canadians.	<i>46</i> <i>266637</i>	UNKNOWN BRITISH SOLDIER. MCGONIGAL	Pte V.	<i>27-9-16</i> <i>K.Y. 1065</i>	<i>RU/8361</i>	3. ✓
31st C.E.F.	797607	SIMS	" E.G.			4. ✓
C.E.F.		UNKNOWN				5. ✓
-do-		UNKNOWN				6. ✓

ENTERED *7 12 20*
SLIPS CHECKED *a.d. 17.12.20*

(6 31 5) W1163-P133 45,000 10/17 HWV(P117) Forms W3372/2
144-1908 70,000 4/18

23. Canadian Burial Party.

CONCENTRATION OF GRAVES (Exhumation and Re-burials).

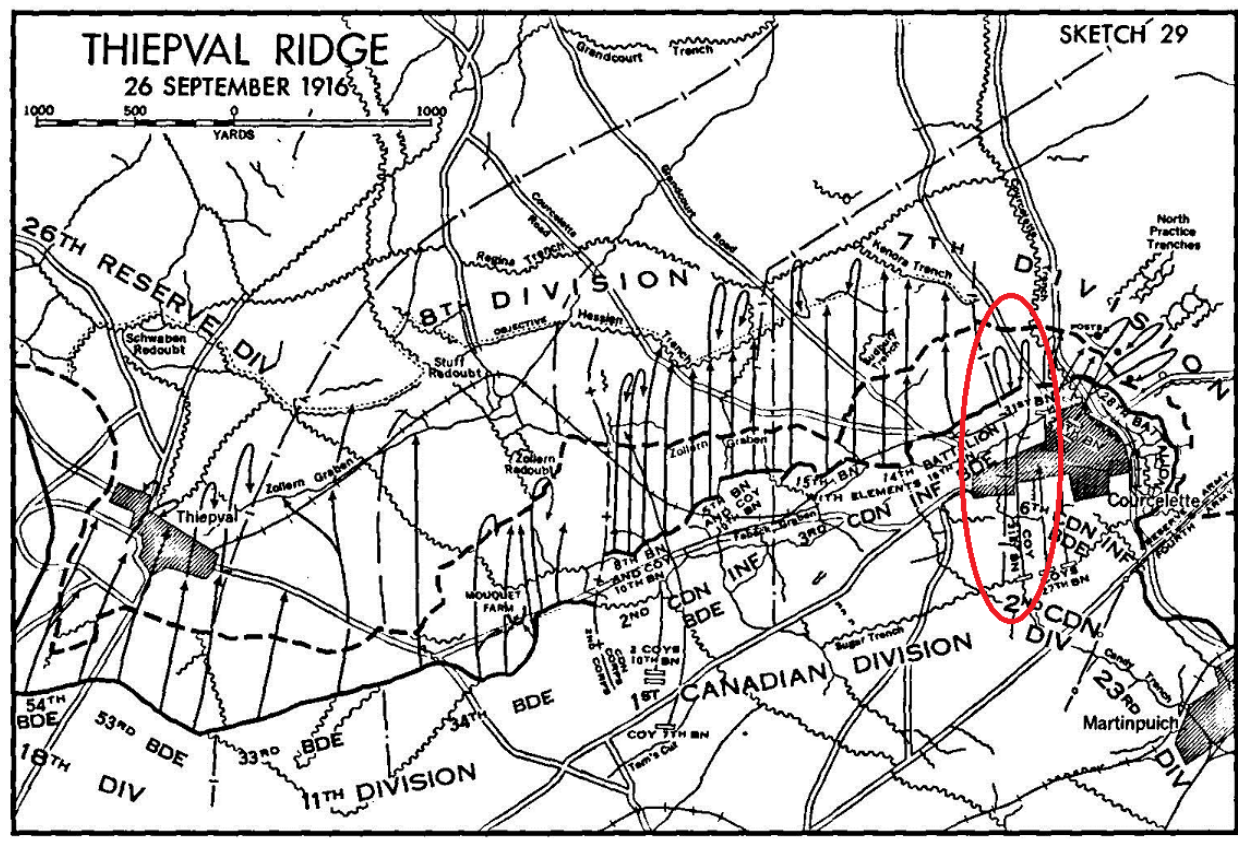
BURIAL RETURN.

Name of Cemetery of Re-burial COURCELETTE BRITISH CEMETERY. Location R.29.D.0.9.
Sheet 57.d. Buried 14/519.

Plot	Row	Grave	Map Reference where body found.	Was Cross on Grave?	Regimental particulars.	Means of Identification.	Were any effects forwarded to Base?
10	C	1	R. 24.57.d.	G.R.U.	C.S.62 Canadian Soldier		No.
		2	R. 29.57.d.	G.R.U.	5 40-289 - G----Wee 25th Cadn.Bn.		Disc.
		3	R. 29.57.d.	G.R.U.	C.S.30.46----Pte.Meden--- Canadian	Broken disc & Badge.	
		4	R.29.57.d.	G.R.U.	C.S.53 797607 Pte.E.G.Sims.	31 Cadn Bn.	Disc
		5	R.29.57.d.	G.R.U.	C.S.54. Canadian Soldier		No.
		6	R.29.57.d.	G.R.U.	P.Q. 64. Canadian Soldier		No.
		7	R.29.57.d.	(95) G.R.U.	100978 Pte.C.T.Shaw 31 Cadn Bn.		Disc
		8	R.29.57.d.	G.R.U.	C.S.52. 79900 Pte.J.A.Ball 31 Cadn.Bn.		No
		9	R.29.57.d.	G.R.U.	Lieut.V.J.L.Eccles.Canadian		No.
		10	R.29.57.d.	G.R.U.	Pte.A.Nortimer		No.
		11	R.29.57.d.	G.R.U.	413019 Pte.J.Grant 29 Cadn Bn.		No.
		12	R.29.57.d.	(94) G.R.U.	C.S.38.Canadian Soldier		No.
		13	R.29.57.d.	G.R.U.	C.S.47. British Soldier		No.
		14	R.30.57.d.	G.R.U.	5. Pte.Bish R.C.R.		No.
		15	R.30.57.d.	(96) G.R.U.	C.Q.50. 14 Cadn Bn.		C.Badges.

ATTACHMENT #9

1. NO. 466637	2. RANK OR RATING Private	3. SURNAME McGONIGAL	4. CHRISTIAN NAMES Vincent
5. UNIT OR SHIP 31st. Battalion	6. DATE OF CASUALTY On or since 27-9-16	7. H.Q. FILE NO. 649-M-9791	8. RELIGION Presbyterian
9. CIRCUMSTANCES OF CASUALTY "Previously reported Missing, now for official purposes presumed to have Died."		10. NAME, RELATIONSHIP AND ADDRESS OF NEXT OF KIN	
11. LOCATION OF UNIT AT TIME OF CASUALTY ATTACK NORTH OF COURCELETTE.			
NOTE:- Items 12, 13 and 14 are not to be completed until grave is permanently located.			
12. CEMETERY	13. LOCATION OF CEMETERY	14. GRAVE LOCATION Grave..... Plot..... Row.....	15. REGISTERED NO. OF GRAVE



ATTACHMENT #10

This “*Reporting and Review*” attachment is provided to assist all parties in the submission of an investigative report related to the identification of the burial location, or headstone markings, of a member of the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) during the Great War 1914-1921. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) receives a copy of this report in the event they wish to make changes to the commemoration details. In order to alter the records, the CWGC has set out their criteria for the procedure and submission of cases for review, as detailed below. The CWGC is under no obligation to make changes based on a report.

Procedure:	Guideline Criteria for Submission:
All new identification cases need to be assessed in the first instance by the Canadian Agency (CA) and submissions should go to their office directly. After an initial assessment, if the Agency feels that the case is compelling, they will then pass all the documentation to the Commemorations Team at the Commission's Head Office. Head Office will then review the case and inform the CA of their findings. The Canadian authorities will then decide whether or not any changes to the arrangements for commemoration are required and inform the Commission accordingly.	Cases need to present clear and convincing evidence to prove the identity of a casualty and must not be based on assumption or speculation. The Commission's Commemoration Team will also consider whether the findings of a better informed contemporary investigation are being revisited and if there is any new evidence to consider. By way of example, it is unlikely that the Commission would support a revision of the arrangements for the commemoration where it is apparent that no new evidence is being presented and, a better informed previous decision is being revisited some 100 years later.

The following have participated in the preparation, review and submission of this report on a voluntary basis. Those noted below have read the investigative report and compared it to the criteria set out by the CWGC, as a guiding principle, and have agreed to have their name included as part of the review team. The CWGC may contact any of the reviewers at the e-mail address provided below.

Name	Affiliation	E-mail	Contribution
Ralph McLean	Private Researcher South Africa War Graves Project	ralph@southafricawargraves.org	Principal Investigator
Richard Laughton	Private Researcher LMC Great War Research Company	rlaughton@laughton.ca	Report Author
Chris Wight	Private Researcher Canadian Expeditionary Force Study Group	guardsmancgg@hotmail.com	Project Reviewer